

A hopefull way to *cure* that horrid Sin of **SWEARING**:

or an *helpe* to save Swearers, if willing to be saved: Being

an Offer or Message from HIM whom they so
daringly and audaciously provoke.

Also a Curbe against CURSING.



Messenger,

{ Before you lay it by, at least reade
the *Postscript* at the end. }

Sir, me thinks you Swear and Curse as if he that made the eare could not hear, Or as if he were neither to be feared nor cared for, who for sin cast the Angels out of Heaven, *Adam* out of Paradise, drowned the old world, rained down fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom*, commanded the earth to open her mouth, and swallow down quicke *Korah* and his companie; he who smote *Egypt* with so many plagues, overthrew *Pharaoh* and his host in the Red sea, destroyed great and mighty Kings, giving their land for an inheritance to his people: and can as easily with a word of his mouth strike you dead while you are blaspheming him, and cast you bodie and soul into Hell for your odious unthankfulnesse: yea, it is a mercie beyond expresseion, that he hath spared you so long.

What, because you are displeased with others, Will you flie in your Makers face? and, tear your Saviours Name in pieces? This is worse than frenzie, this is to send challenges into Heaven, and make love to destruction; consider of it, least you swear away your part in that Bloud which must save you, if ever you be saved; yea, take heed lest you be plagued with a witnessse, and that both here and hereafter: for God (who cannot lie) hath threatned that his curse shall never depart from the house of the *Swearer*, as it is *Zach. 5. 1. to 5.* And I doubt not but you are already cursed, though you know it not; That either he hath cursed you in your bodie by sending some foule Disease, or in your estate by suddainly consuming it, or in your name by blemishing and blasting it, or in your seed by not prospering it, or in your minde by darkening it, or in your heart by hardening it, or in your conscience by terrifying it, or will in your soule by everlastingly damning it, if you repent not. Wherefore take heed what you do before it prove too late.

Or if you regard not your selfe, or your own scoules good, yet for the Kingdomes good leave your swearing: for the Lord (as now we finde to our smart) hath a great controversie with the inhabitants of the land, because of swearing, *Hosea 4. 1, 2.* Yea, because of oaths the whole land (even the three Kingdomes) now mourneth, or rather lies a bleeding, and that by death, as you may see, *Jer. 23. 10.* Neither object that ye are so accustomed to Swearing that you cannot leave it; for this defence is worse than the offence; as take an instance, Shall a Thiefe or Murderer at the Bar alleage for his defence, that it hath been his use and custome of a long time to rob and kill, and therefore he must continue it; or if he do, will not the Judge so much the rather send him to the Gallows?

Besides, the objection is false and frivo'ous, for were you forced to pay twelve pence for every Oath you swear (as the Law enjoynes) or if you were sure to have your tongue cut out, which is too light a punishment for this sin, damnation being the due penaltie thereof, as the Apostle sets it down, *James 5. 12.* you both could and would leave it. Wherefore I beseech you by the mercies of God (who hath removed so many evils, and conferred so many good things upon you, that they are beyond thought or imagination) to leave it: especially after this warning, which in case you do not, will be a sore witnessse, and rise up in judgement against you another day.

Swearer. Did I swear or curse?

Messenger. Very often, as all here present can witnessse, and Satan also, who stands by to take notice, reckon up, and set on your score every Oath you utter, keeping them upon Record against the great day of Assise, at which time every Oath will prove as a daggers point stabbing your soul to the heart, or as so many weights pressing you down to Hell, *Rev. 20. 13; 22. 12.* As also the searcher of hearts, who himselfe will one day be a swift witnessse against Swearers, *Mal. 3. 5.* For of all other sinners the Lord will not hold him guiltlesse that taketh his Name in vain, as the third Comandment tells you, *Exod. 20. 7.*

But wo is me, it fares with common Swearers as with persons desperately diseased, whose excrements and filth comes from them at unawares; for as by much labour the hand is so hardened that it hath no sense of labour, so their much swearing causeth such a brawny skin of senselesnesse to overspread the heart, memorie, and conscience, that the Swearer swearcth unwittingly; and having sworn, hath no remembrance of his Oath, much lesse repentance for his sin.

Swearer. Alas, though I did swear, yet I thought no harme.

Messenger. O fool! What Prince, hearing himselfe abused to his face, by the reproachfull words of his base and impotent Subject, would admit of such an excuse? that whatsoever he spake with his mouth, yet he thought no ill in his heart? And shall God take this for a good answer, having told us before hand, *Deut. 28. 58, 59.* that if we do not fear and dread his glorious and fearfull Name, the Lord our God he will make our plagues wonderfull, and of long continuance, and the plagues of our posterity. Besides, how frequently doest thou pollute and prophane Gods Name, and thy Saviours? The Jews grievously sinned in crucifying the Lord of life but once, and that of ignorance: but the times are innumerable that thou doest it, every day in the year, every hour in the day, although thy Conscience, and the holy Spirit of grace hath checkt thee for it, a thousand and a thousand times.

Doest thou expect to have *Christ* thy Redeemer and Advocate; when thy Conscience tells thee that thou hast seldome remembered Him but to blaspheme Him? and more often named Him in thy Oathes and Curses, than in thy prayers.

Swearer. Surely, if I did swear, it was but Faith and Troth, by our Lady, the Masse, the Rood, the Light, this Bread, by the crosse of the silver, or the like: which is no great matter, I hope, so long as I swore not by God, nor by my Saviour.

Messenger. That is your grosse ignorance of the Scriptures, for God expressly forbids it, and that upon pain of damnation, *Jam. 5. 12.* First, our Saviour *Christ* in his own person forbids it, *Matth. 5. 34, 35, 36, 37.* I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is Gods Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his Foot-stool; nor by Ierusalem, for it is the Citie of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thine heale, because thou canst not make one hair white or blacke; but let your communication be, Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay: for whatsoever is more than these commeth of evil. And then by his Apostle, Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, nor by Earth, nor by any other Oath, but let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay: lest ye fall into condemnation, *James 5. 12.* where marke the Emphasis in the first words, Above all things swear not; and the great danger of it in the last word, condemnation.

If the matter be light and vain, we must not swear at all; if so weighty, that we may lawfully swear as before a Magistrate, being called to it, then we must onely use the glorious Name of our God in a holy and religious manner, as you may see, *Deut. 6. 13. Isai 45. 23. Ps. 65. 16. Iosh. 23. 7. Ier. 5. 7. Exod. 23. 13.* And the reasons of it are weighty, if we look into them; for in swearing by any Creature whatsoever, we do invoke that Creature, and ascribe to it divine worship; a lawfull Oath being a kinde of Invocation, and a part of Gods worship; Yea, whatsoever we swear by, that we invoke, both as our witnesse, suretie, and judge, *Hebr. 6. 16* and by consequence deifie it, by ascribing and communicating unto it Gods incommunicable Attributes, as his Omnipresence, and Omniscience of being every where present, and knowing the secret thoughts and intentions of the heart: and likewise an Omnipotence, as being Almighty in parronising, protecting, defending, and rewarding us for speaking the truth, or punishing us if we speak falsly: all which are so peculiar to God, as that they can no way be communicated or ascribed to another. So that in swearing by any of those things, thou committest an high degree of grosse Idolatrie, thou spoilest and robbest God of his glorie (the most impious kinde of theft) and in a manner dethronest Him, and placest an Idol in his room.

And as to swear by the Creature makes the sin far more heinous, so the more mean and vile the thing is which you swear by (be it by my sey, by cock and pie, hares foot, by this cheefe, and such like childish Oaths, which are so much in use with the ignorant and superstitious swarme) the greater is your sin in swearing (such an Oath) because you ascribe that unto these basest of Creatures, which is onely proper to God, namely to know your heart, and to be a discernor of secret things; why else should you call that Creature as a witnesse unto your Conscience, that you speak the truth and lie not, which onely belongeth to God? And therefore the Lord calls it a forsaking of him; as marke well what he saith, *Ier. 5. 7. How shall I spare thee for this? thy children have forsaken me and sworn by them that are no gods, Exod. 23. 13.* And do you make it a small matter to forsake God, and make a God of the Creature? Will you believe the Prophet *Amos*, if you will, he saith (speaking of them that swore by the sin of *Samaris*) that they shall fall and never rise again, *Amos 8. 14.* A terrible place to vain Swearers.

Neither are we to joyne any other with God in our Oaths, for in so doing, we make base Idols, and filthy Creatures Corrivalls in honour, and Competitors in the Throne of Justice with the Lord, who is Creator of Heaven and Earth, and the supreme Judge and sole Monarch of all the World.

Or, in case we do, our doom shall be remediable, for the Lord threatneth by the Prophet *Zephany*, that he will cut off them that swear by the Lord and by *Maulcham*: which *Maulcham* was their King, or as some thinke, their Idol, *Zeph. 1. 4, 5.*

But admit the sin were small, as you would have it to be, yet the circumstances make it most heinous; for even the least sin in its own nature is not onely mortal, but rests unpardonable: so long as it is willingly committed, and excused or defended.

Swearer. But all do swear, except some few singu'ar ones, and they also will lie, which is as bad.

Messenger. You must not measure all others by your own bushel, for although ill Dispositions cause ill Suspicions; even as the eye that is bludshot sees all things red, or as they that have the Jaundies see all things yellow; yet know that there be thousands who can say truly, through Gods mercie, that they had rather chuse to have their souls passe from their bodies than a wilfull premeditated lie, or a wicked Oath from their mouths; wherefore when you want experience, thinke the best, as Charitie bids you, and leave what you know not to the Searcher of hearts.

As for the number of Swearers, it cannot be denied, but the sin is almost universal, and this is it which hath incensed Gods wrath, and almost brought an universal destruction upon our whole Nation; but is not this excuse [That others do so] a most reasonlesse plea, and onely becomming a fool: when our Saviour *Christ* hath plainly told us, that the greater number go the broad way to destruction, and but a few the narrow way which leadeth unto life, *Matthew 7. 13, 14.* And Saint *John*, that the whole world lieth in wickednesse, *1 John 5. 19.* And that the number of those whom Satan shall deceive, is as the sand of the sea, *Reu. 20. 8.* and *13. 16. Isai. 10. 22. Rom 9. 27.*

And tell me, Were it a good plea to commit a Felonie, and say that others do so? Or, Wilt thou leap into Hell, and cast away thy Soul, because others do so? A sorry comfort it will be to have a numerous multitude accompanie us into that lake of fire that never shall be quenched.

Besides, it is Gods expresse charge, *Exod. 23. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, and Saint Paul's everlasting rule, *Rom. 12. 2. Fashion not your selves like unto this world.*

Swearer. But I may lawfully swear, so I affirme nothing but the truth.

Messenger. If you be lawfully called to it, as before a Magistrate, or when some urgent matter constraineth for the confirming of a necessary truth (which can by no other lawfull meanes be cleared) and for the ending of all contentions and controversies, and clearing our own or our neighbours good name, person, or estate, and to put an end to all strife, aiming at Gods glorie and our own or our neighbours good: which is the onely use and end of an Oath; in which case a man is rather a patient, than a voluntary Agent: You may swear, otherwise not.

Neither must we swear at all in our ordinary communication, if we will obey Gods Word, as you may see, *Matth. 5. 34, 35, 36, 37. Iam. 5. 12.*

Swearer. Except I swear men will not believe me.

Messenger. Thou hadst as good say, I have so often made shipwracke of my credit by accustomed lying, that I can gain no believe unto my words without an Oath, for it argues a guilty conscience of the want of credit, and that our word alone is worth no respect, when it will not be taken without a pawn or suretie. Neither will any but base Banquerouts pawn so precious a jewell as their Faith, or offer better securitie for evrey small trifle. Besides, he that often sweareth, not seldome forswareth. And so I have informed you from Gods Word, what the danger is of vain and wicked swearing.

Now if you either believe the Scriptures, or desire to escape that dreadful sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Matth. 25. 41.* No longer excuse nor defend it, but repent of it and forsake it; and so much the rather, for that of all other sinnes this sin of Swearing is the most inexcusable: First, because it is a sin from which of all other sinnes we have most power of abstinence, as I shewed you before; and the easier the thing commanded is, the greater guilt in the breach of it; and the lighter the injunction, the heavier the transgression; as *Austin* speaks, and *Adam* his eating the forbidden fruit sufficiently proves. Secondly, because it is a sin, to which of all other sinnes we have the fewest temptations; for all thou canst expect by it is, the suspicion of a common Lye by being a common Swearer; Or, that thou shalt vex others, and they shall hate thee: for it brings not so much as any appearance of good unto us to induce us: for whereas other sinnes have their severall bribes to allure us, some the bait of profit, some of honour, some of pleasure, this sin is destitute of them all, and onely bringeth much losse here, namely of credit and a good conscience; and the losse of Gods favour, and the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter, which is of more value than ten thousand worlds; which shews that thou lovest this sin onely because it is a sin, and swearest out of meer malice to, and contempt of God, which is most fearfull; and (as a man would thinke) should make it unpardonable, I am sure the Psalmist hath a terrible word for all such, if they would take notice of it, *Let them be confounded that transgresse without a cause, Psal. 25. 3.*

And no marvell, that this fearfull Imprecation should fall from the Prophet's mouth? for that man is bottomlesly ill, who loves vice meerly because it is a vice, and because God most strictly forbids it. He is a desperate, prodigious, damnable wretch who (rather than not die) will anger God on set purpose.

But as if Swearing alone would not presse thee deep enough into Hell, thou addest Cursing to it, a sin of an higher nature; which none use frequently, but such as are desperately wicked, it being their peculiar brand in Scripture, as how dorch the Holy Ghost stigmatize such an one? *His mouth is full of cursing, Psal. 10. 7. & Rom. 3. 14. or he loveth cursing, Psal. 109. 17.* and indeed, whom can you observe to love this sin, or to have their mouths full of cursing? but Ruffians, and sons of Belial, such as have shaken out of their hearts the fear of God, the shame of men, the love of Heaven, the dread of Hell, not once caring what is thought or spoken of them here, or what becomes of them hereafter; yea, observe them well, and you will finde, that they are ruckers of all, that march not under the pay of the Devil.

And whence do these monsters of the earth, these hellish miscreants, these bodily and visible Devils learne this their damnable Cursing and Swearing? Are not their tongues fired and edged from Hell? as Saint James hath it, *Iam. 3. 6.* yea, it is the very language of the damned, as you may see *Revel. 16. 11, 12.* Onely they learne it here before they come thither; and are such proficient therein, that the Devil counts them his best scholars, and sets them in his highest forme, *Psal. 1. 1.* And well they deserve it, with whom the language of Hell is so familiar, that blasphemie is become their mother tongue. Besides, it is the very depth of sin, roaring and drinking is the horse-way to Hell; whoring and cheating the foot-way; but Swearing and Cursing follows *Korah, Dathan, and Abiron.* And certainly, if the infernall Tophet be not for these men, it can challenge no guests. But see how wickeffe, glacelesse, and shamelesse, even the best are that use to curse; for I passe over such as call for a Curse on themselves, saying, God damne me, Confound me, The Devil take me, and the like; which would make a rational man tremble to name, because I were as good knocke at a dead mans grave, as speak to them.

Thou art crossed by some one, perhaps thy wife, childe, or servant, or else thy horse, the weather, the dice, bowler, or some other of the creatures displease thee; and thou fallst a cursing, and blaspheming them, wishing the plague

of God, or Gods vengeance to light on them, or some such hellish speech falls from thy foul mouth. And so upon every foolish trifle, or every time thou art angry, : God must be at thy beck, and come down from heaven in all haste and become thy officer to revenge thy quarrell, and serve thy malicious humour. (O monstrous impietie! O shamelesse impudencie! to be abhorred of all that hear it) not once taking notice what he commands in his Word, as, *Blesse them that persecute you, blesse, I say, and curse not, Rom. 12. 14.* And again, *Blesse them that curse you, and pray for them which hurt you, Luke 6. 28.* which is the practice of all true Christians, *1 Cor. 4. 12.*

But this is not one halfe of thine offence, for whom dost thou curse? Alas, the Creatures that displease thee are but Instruments, thy sin is the cause, and God is the Authour, *2 Sam. 16. 11. Psal. 39. 9, 10. Gen. 45. 8. Job 1. 21.* from whom thou hast deserved it, and ten thousand times a greater crosse. : but instead of looking up from the stone, to the hand which threw it; or from the effect to the cause; as Gods people do; thou like a Mastiffe dog, settest upon the stone or weapon that hurts thee. But in this case, who are you angry withall? Does your Horse, the Dice, the Rain, or any other Creature displease you? Alas, they are but servants, and if their Master bid Smite, they must not forbear : they may say truly what *Rabshakeh* usurped, *Isai 36. 10. Are we come without the Lord :* and all that hear thee may say, as the Prophet did to *Senacherib*, *2 Kings 19. 32. Whom hast thou blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy selfe? even against the holy One of Israel.*

And what will be the issue? the causelesse Curse shall not come where the Curser meant it, *Prov. 26. 2.* yea, though thou cursest, yet God will blesse, *Psal. 109. 28.* but thy Curses shall be sure to rebound back into thine own breast, *Psal. 7. 14, 15, 16. Prov. 14. 30.* Cursing mouthes are like ill made Pieces, which while men discharge at others, recoil in splinters on their own faces. Their words and wishes be but whirlwindes, which being breathen forth, returne again to the same place. As hear how the holy Ghost delivers it, *Psal. 109. As he loved cursing, so shall it come unto him; and as he loved not blessing, so shall it be farre from him. As he clothed himselfe with cursing like a garment, so shall it come into his bowels like water, and like oyle into his bones; let it be unto him as a garment to cover him, and for a girdle wherewith he shall alwayes be girded, v. 17, 18, 19.* Hear this all ye, whose tongues run so fast on the Devils errand, you loved Cursing, you shall have it, both upon you, about you, and in you, and that everlastingly; if you persevere and go on; for Christ himselfe at the last day, even he which came to save the world, shall say unto all such, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, Matth. 25. 41.* Where they shall do nothing but curse for evermore; for they no farther apprehending the goodnesse, mercie, and bountie of God, then by the sense of their own torments, the effects of his justice shall hate him, and hating him they shall curse him, *Rev. 16. 11, 21. They suffer, and they blaspheme : there is in them a furious malice against him, being cursed of him, they recurse him; they curse him for making them, curse him for condemning them, and curse him because being adjudged to death, they can never finde death; they curse his punishments, because they are so unsufferable; curse his mercies, because they may never tast them; curse the Bloud of Christ shed on the Crosse, because it hath satisfied for millions, and done their unbelieving souls no good; curse the Angels and Saints in Heaven, because they see them in joy and themselves in torment; Cursings shall be their sins, and their chief ease, Blasphemies their Prayers, Lacryme their notes, Lamentation all their harmonie; these shall be their evening songs, their morning songs, their mourning songs for ever and ever. And indeed, who shall go to Hell, if Curfers should be left out? Wherefore let all those learne to blesse, that look to be heires of the blessing.*

Other objections follow in this conference, and are accordingly answered (with the meanes of cure prescribed, &c.) in the ten ensuing pages, which are also printed for such as thinke these foure over short. But being loth either to surfeit or cloy the Swearer, who is commonly short breath'd in well doing; and least adding more should hinder him from reading this (for Satan and his corrupt heart will not condescend, he shall hold out to hear his beloved sin so spoken against) it breaks off thus abruptly.

Postscript.

YOU that fear God, or have any bowels of compassion towards the precious soules of those poor ignorant men, women, and children, whom you hear to swear and curse as Dogs barked; (that is not more of curstnesse than out of custom;) with them to reade these four pages, neither count it as a thing indifferent which may either be done or dispensed withall: for besides that God hath commanded the dutie of admonition, *Hebr. 3. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 25.* and commended the practice of it, *Rev. 2. 26.* and condemned the contrary, *v. 20.* If you do not it, or the like, you hate your brother, *Lev. 19. 17.* and make your selfe guilty both of his sin and ruine, *Ezek. 3. 18. to 22.* Nor can you love God and patiently hear these miscreants blaspheme his holy Name as they do, *2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.* Or manifest your selfe his by adoption and regeneration: for well born children are touched to the quicke with the injuries of their parents, and not to be moved in this case, is to confesse our selves bastards. Which being so, make it a part of your charitie to give of them as you meet with occasion: as that you shall hourly do, even as you passe the streets, if you but minde it. Now thinke what account you shall give of that you have read. If you would past it on a wall or table, take two of each leafe, placing the pages thus: 1. 2. 3. 4. paring away the margens. These are sold by Nathaniel Webb and William Grantham at the Grey-hound in Pauls Church yard, and Nathaniel Brooks at the Angel in Corn-hill, and at James Cromptons a Book-binder in Little Bartholomews Well Yard.

At the same places, you may have the like Antidote, against three other no lesse heynous and common sinnes; or larger Discourses by the same Authour.

Imprimatur,
John Downame.